

CONTRA HERESIES SERIES

PART I



Contra Non-Chalcedonians

Margarita G.

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Part I of the Contra Heresies Series

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Author

Big thanks to my contributors: Cyril, Spartiatas, and Madison.

Editors

Note from the author:

The presented information is compiled by laymen and gathered from conversations with miaphysites, as well as self-study of the Fathers. Majority of what is presented here is from our prior knowledge, however, citations will be given where they are due. The material was compiled to inform and educate the reader about heresy so that they do not fall into it, not to use the information given for prideful purposes. The presented content was reviewed by clergy.

Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition, knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned.

Titus 3:10-11

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I. Introduction to Miaphysitism

A. Background on Oriental Churches

1

The Oriental Orthodox¹ Churches are a union of miaphysite Churches that split from the Orthodox Church after the Council of Chalcedon of 451, due to the Council's decision to depose Dioscorus of his Pope seat in Alexandria and condemn miaphysitism. The Oriental Churches in communion with each other are the Coptic, Syriac, Eritrean, Armenian Apostolic, Ethiopian, and Malankara Indian Churches. Instead of diving deeply into every Oriental Church, as each of them has their own specific history of how they came to be, we will summarize their beliefs, founding fathers, and ultimately their rejection of Orthodoxy.

2

The Oriental view is primarily based on the misinterpretation of St. Cyril's intended use of the word "nature," which we will elaborate on. Nevertheless, from the Oriental view, St. Cyril saying that there is "One Incarnate Nature" of Christ meant that there is one nature in the Person of Christ, out of two natures. Miaphysites believe that, before the Hypostatic Union, there were two natures in contemplation — a divine nature and a human nature. However, after the Hypostatic Union, these two natures united into one nature, which had 100% of properties from both natures.

They believe that there is one Person, one nature, and one will in Christ. A divine nature and a human nature were united in a perfect Hypostatic Union into one nature without confusion, mixture, or division, making Christ the God Incarnate. The divinity and humanity of Christ remained distinct from one another, but neither worked in contradiction to the other, pointing to Christ's one will. The will of Christ is shown when He willed to take on humanity in its fullness (hunger, fatigue, etc.), while simultaneously carrying out divine acts (healing, walking on water, etc.). We experience these sinless passions, such as hunger, because we are subject to the consequences of Adam's sin, but Christ experienced these blameless passions because He willed to do so as a result of His one divine-human will.

¹ Note: Miaphysite Churches are known as Oriental 'Orthodox', however, their Christology is in contradiction to Orthodoxy, hence why many do not refer to them as Orthodox.

This is the summary of the miaphysite beliefs on Christology; the primary reason for their rejection of the Council of Chalcedon and all other ecumenical councils that followed.

Of course, these beliefs primarily stemmed from the miaphysite founding fathers; Severus of Antioch (r. 512-518), Dioscorus I of Alexandria (r. 444-451), and the less known Timothy II Aelerus of Alexandria (r. 457-477)². While Dioscorus and Severus clearly professed one divine-human nature in Christ, Timothy Aelerus was an odd case. While he did profess the miaphysite stance, he sometimes fell into monophysitism, saying that “the only nature of Christ is divine, although it is Incarnate,” in his *3rd Book from Cherson, Ch. 8*. Occasionally, Miaphysites would say that Timothy is referring to the pre-Incarnate divine nature of the Word becoming Incarnate, therefore uniting into one nature. However, Timothy’s views are sometimes unclear, as most of his works were preserved only in Armenian, and the original works were lost.

Regardless, most Orientals today have stuck to the beliefs set forth by these figures, as Pope Shenouda III proclaimed, “As a result of the unity of both natures — the divine and the human — inside the Virgin’s womb, one nature was formed out of both. ‘The One Nature of God the Incarnate Logos,’ as St. Cyril called it.”

3

The Robber Council of Ephesus³, or the Second Council of Ephesus, was convened in 449 by Emperor Theodosius II (r. 408-450) and presided over by Pope Dioscorus to discuss issues that arose after the First Council of Ephesus in 431, such as the deposition of Eutyches by Patriarch St. Flavian I for preaching one nature. The Council also discussed if there was one nature or two natures in Christ, going off of St. Cyril’s condemnation of Nestorius in the First Council of Ephesus. Ultimately, the decisions of the council resulted in the anathematization⁴ of Patriarch St. Flavian I of Constantinople (r. 446-449) and Pope St. Leo I the Great (r. 440-461), as well as lifting of St. Flavian’s accusations against Eutyches. Both St. Leo and St. Flavian were accused of Nestorianism. During this Council, the Papal legate and then-deacon St. Hilarius rejected the council on behalf of Rome by stating “contradicitur” during the council’s proceedings. This was due to the fact that no opposing statements from any party were allowed to be read, including the Tome of St. Leo to St. Flavian. Also, St. Flavian was not permitted to defend himself during the Council due to the fact that there was no

² Note: All reign dates are copied from various search engines or databases.

³ *Second Council of Ephesus*, New World Encyclopedia

⁴ Note: A Church’s official condemnation of a person or a group of people, declaring their complete separation from the Church, usually because of heresy - More severe form of excommunication (also see *Glossary*)

debate. This council was rejected before it even ended.

Unfortunately, this Robber Council of Ephesus led to the murder of St. Flavian by the followers of Dioscorus. During the Robber Council's sessions, he was severely beaten by the opposing attendees, including by Dioscorus himself. His injuries were so horrific that he died just a few days later, after being chained and exiled. Previously, during the Council, St. Flavian and his followers complained that they could barely get a word in. After this news reached Pope St. Leo I, he declared the Council as a *Latrocinium*, or a Robber Council.

Because Dioscorus revoked the charges posed on Eutyches by St. Flavian, later in 451, during the Council of Chalcedon, Dioscorus was accused of Eutychianism (or more commonly known as monophysitism).

It is important to note that, while Dioscorus did support Eutyches (especially politically), the Oriental Churches did anathematize Eutyches later on, because he believed that the human nature was absorbed by the divine nature. Miaphysites may sometimes say that Dioscorus allowed the charges on Eutyches to be revoked, as long as he repented of his heresy, which he supposedly did until later adhering to the heresy again. This is very unlikely when you look at how the Robber Council of Ephesus unfolded, as explained in above paragraphs. Dioscorus didn't even allow the charges against Eutyches to be brought up during some of the first session of the Robber Council, but eventually he was convinced to allow it. Taking into account his censoring of St. Flavian and his followers, who were the first to accuse Eutyches, you would think that Dioscorus would at least hear them out if he truly believed Eutyches did fall into heresy. However, Dioscorus turned to violence instead.

B. Armenian Apostolic Contradiction of Oriental Orthodoxy

4

Although the miaphysite churches are all in communion with each other, not all of them necessarily agree on major theological issues. The best and most obvious example of that is the Armenian Apostolic Church (AAC). The AAC has a history of switching back and forth between Chalcedonianism (dyophysitism) and miaphysitism, until they finally settled on miaphysitism. In fact, some of their saints, like Catholicos Nerses Shnorhali [the Gracious] (r. 1166-1173), tried to reunite with the Greeks by affirming dyophysitism. Some Armenians call Nerses Shnorhali an ecumenist while defending his position. While, yes, he did affirm standard miaphysitism, he heavily leaned towards Cyrillian 'miaphysitism', which we will discuss later. Nerses

Shnorhali's acceptance of dyophysitism is clear when he spoke of dogmas of the Armenian Church, which read,⁵

“Christ is both flesh and without flesh, flesh by virtue of the human nature He assumed, and without flesh by virtue of the divine nature which He had.”

Shnorhali, then, in the same dogma, writes in a way that appeals to both dyophysitism and miaphysitism,

“...but one essence and one personality out of two natures united in one Christ...”

On the surface, many things that Shnorhali has professed could be labeled as Oriental Orthodox miaphysitism. However, just by reading his dogma of the Church, something the Armenian Church deems as fully authentic, Shnorhali appears to be much more Cyrillian, and the same can be said for some Armenian theologians even shortly after Chalcedon, which shows the flip-flopping of the Armenian Church between dyophysitism and miaphysitism. This indeed points to the AAC being closer to Eastern Orthodoxy, as the dogma of the AAC reads,

On the example of the will of which we spoke showing that out of one free will of the Godhead, there are *two wills*, the divine and the human, that are unopposed so also we believe that in the union similarly the operation is divine and human... but the *one united out of two opposites that has become one*, bore the passions of each of the opposites, namely, the passions and death of the human nature, and the impassibility and immortality of the divine nature...

Again, on the surface it is extremely miaphysite. However, is it a human nature that experiences death, or the human person as a whole? Similarly, is it the Word Incarnate who died in His humanity? And is it simply the divine nature that is immortal, or is it the nature/essence of the Godhead as a whole? Nerses Shnorhali, a saint for the AAC and all Oriental Churches, issued this Church dogma which is still upheld and read today, which confirmed dyophysitism as legitimate and reinstated St. Cyril's way of terminology.

In addition to this dogmatic proclamation, the AAC used to anathematize Severus because of his claim that Christ is corruptible. They revoked their condemnation after the Council of Manzikert in 726, where the Syriacs reconciled with the Armenians. However, to this day, the AAC does not formally canonize or venerate Severus nor Dioscorus, the two main fathers of Orientalism. AAC veneration of them

⁵ *Definition of Faith of the Armenian Church, by Nerses Catholicos of All Armenians At the Request of Emperor Manuel, The God-Loving King of the Greeks* | All quotes in this section by Shnorhali are from this set dogma

occurs only on local levels or by the Armenian Catholic Church of Cilicia, who are not Oriental Orthodox.

If a communion of Churches is the true Church of Christ, if it is the one holy, catholic, Apostolic Church, then one case of a severe contradiction like this is enough to question its catholicity due to there being a lack of unity in faith in the communion. Because dyophysitism is heretical to the Oriental Orthodox, this would mean that heresy was being passed off as dogma, which would also mean the gates of hell have prevailed against it⁶, making the Oriental Church and their communion false. At the very least, it renders a significant part of their communion to be in heresy and should be removed from it entirely.

C. Terminology

5

The miaphysite heresy has its roots not only in its founding fathers but also in the confusion of terminology. The Orthodox mostly use the Cappadocian/post-Nicene terminology rather than the pre-Nicene terminology, as the Cappadocian Fathers gave more precise definitions, while the pre-Nicene Fathers normally gave more broad definitions and used terms interchangeably often, which is what the miaphysites have misinterpreted. St. Cyril is the main Church Father they like to use, as he is known to use terms more broadly, as do they. However, how miaphysites use these terms is *not* how St. Cyril nor other pre-Nicene Fathers intended them to be used. The pre-Nicene Fathers often defined hypostasis as an individuated nature, or one Incarnate Nature (in Christ), which more precisely means essence or concrete reality (depending on the context 'hypostasis' is used in).

Although, again, miaphysites use terms interchangeably, they often equate hypostasis, nature, and physis to mean the same thing, though they sometimes (in Triadology) use these to mean essence, or ousia, as well. Because of this misunderstanding of terms, Orientals see the Hypostatic Union, stemming from the word 'hypostasis', as a union of two natures into one nature. So the union, for miaphysites, while being in the Person of Christ, is mostly in the one mia-nature. It is important to note that Christology and Triadology are heavily connected, so the terms being used differently can be very confusing.

Meanwhile, for the Orthodox, hypostasis means a concrete reality, particular substance, or person. A person is a concrete reality, an agent possessing nature(s). In the case of Christ, the Hypostatic Union is a union of a human nature and a divine

⁶ Matthew 16:18

nature in one Hypostasis (Person) of Christ. It is the Logos assuming a human nature, hence why Christ is called the Logos Incarnate.

Miaphysites equate a concrete reality to nature instead of person. And like the Orthodox, they agree that every nature must have its person, as a nature cannot exist on its own. However, if a nature is a concrete reality, it can live independently from its person, entailing division and therefore two persons, or in the case of Christ, two sons.

II. Oriental Accusations Against Orthodoxy

A. “Nestorianism”

1

Accusations (Ac) from Orientals, and answers (An) to those accusations.

Ac: There were a lot of Nestorians present at the Council of Chalcedon.

An: This does not invalidate the Ecumenical Council. We could say the same thing. Should we call miaphysites Eutychian because Eutyches was present at the Robber Council? Even if Nestorius himself was present at the Council of Chalcedon, this would not invalidate it. Plus, the Council reaffirmed the anathema over Nestorius as said here: “...which he wrote to Nestorius, which was approved by all the most holy bishops assembled in the first Council at Ephesus, called to condemn the same Nestorius, and which was confirmed by the subscription of all.”

Ac: Nestorius believed in two sons, but he professed two natures, not two sons, just like the Eastern Orthodox.

An: Two natures does not necessitate two sons, as shown in the letter of St. Cyril to John of Antioch, where he says that the Son is “of the same substance with His Father according to His divinity, and of the same substance with us according to His humanity; for there became a *union of two natures*. Wherefore we confess one Christ, one Son, one Lord.” The Saint also references the Holy Apostle Paul when he says that “the first man is of the earth; the Second Man is the Lord from heaven.” The Orthodox do not believe in two sons. We believe that the Hypostatic Union was a union of just that; hypostasis; becoming one in the Person of Christ, while keeping both His divine and human natures, and the properties of both.

Ac: Duality necessitates separation between Godhead and manhood.

An: This view necessitates unity to be found in the nature, not the Person of Christ, which would indeed make duality division. However, if that view is true, then the Triad would also necessitate separation between the Persons of the Godhead, equating to three gods. If you say that the union of two natures in the Person of Christ is division, Christ being the uniting factor, then the union of the three Persons under one essence/Godhead is division, the Godhead being the uniting factor.

Ac: Dyophysitism entails the death of Christ’s human nature and not the Person of Christ Himself.

An: Natures don't die — persons do. Christ died in His flesh and resurrected through His divinity as God the Word. Dyophysitism does not separate natures, but it does allow for distinctions between them. Going by miaphysitism, both Christ's divinity and humanity had to have fully died for the sake of consistency, being that Dioscorus said that there is no degree of separation in the natures whatsoever, even in death. This would imply that as His flesh suffered pain, so did His divinity. With that said, does divinity possess the trait of immortality? Can divinity be corrupted? These theological inconsistencies lead to a confusion of terms when you consider one nature possessing opposing traits in itself; death and immortality, sickness and immunity, pain and relief, etc.

Ac: The Bible never talks about duality of natures.

Similar Ac: In Revelation 1:17-18, Christ uses the pronoun "I", meaning He is in one nature and not two.

An: It's not that the Bible never talks about duality, but it's that the verses that do are misinterpreted by miaphysites. However, we all know Christ is both God (Immanuel) and man (Child), as said in Isaiah 7:14,16. He is both divine and human, or God Incarnate. When referring to the essence, early Church Fathers often call it 'divinity'. In other words, Christ is the 'Divine Nature Incarnate'.

Similar An: This is over analysis of Scripture. By using the pronoun "I", do you not talk as an individual? Similarly, when Christ said "I", He talked as the Word Incarnate, not as a distinct nature. All human and divine attributes in Christ, which He associates with Himself by using the pronoun, simply prove that the human nature and the divine nature are united in Christ. Christ is the unifying force of both; in Him did the mystery of the Hypostatic Union occur.

Ac: Two wills in Christ would mean that each will acts independently of the other due to two lines of action.

An: This claim requires one to believe that the union is in the natures, not in the Person of Christ. Because the union of natures is in the Person, this is not an issue. However, claiming that each will must act independently or contradict the other misrepresents how a human nature is united to God. A perfect human will is united to the will of God and cannot contradict it. As Christ was perfect, He divinized the nature which He took on, making it so that the will of His human nature cannot contradict the will of His divinity, rendering this point non-contentious with Orthodox Christology.

Ac: Eastern Orthodox say that Christ has two natures, yet claim that we as humans are made up of two natures (soul and body) united into one human nature. So by Eastern Orthodox logic, Christ possesses three natures — divinity, soul, and body.

An: This is a major misunderstanding of dyophysitism. By miaphysite logic, we have one human nature. However, by the Orthodox view, there are two elements (soul and body) united to compose one person, as the union is in the person, not the elements/natures. A person possesses 2 elements because he is composite. Christ could not have taken on an individual person, because that would mean that Christ either redeemed one man or that He took on another son. So Christ took on the fullness of humanity as one nature.

Ac: St. Cyril said that whoever divides the natures of Christ after the union, or purely joins them in a union of morality or authority, let him be anathema.

An: St. Cyril wrote this as an anathema against Nestorians specifically, because Nestorius *did* believe in two sons, claiming that because Christ has two natures, He must then have two persons. This is not the case and is an improper reading of St. Cyril, who clearly supported Orthodox Christology, namely in his letters to Nestorius, John of Antioch, and to Succensus. Knowing the proper context both to St. Cyril's Christological teaching and to whom he was writing this to, one can ascertain that he was not anathematizing the Christology of Chalcedon.

Ac: Saying that there are two hypostasis in Christ is Nestorianism, as you divide Him into two sons.

An: This is a confusion of terms. When miaphysites see Eastern Orthodox saying two natures, they equate natures to hypostases, or persons. Conflating nature and person can lead to heresies within Triadology, not just Christology, as Christ is a Person of the Trinity. We do not say that there are two hypostases, but two natures in one Hypostasis of Christ. 'Hypostasis' in Greek is an individual substance or a unique nature, both of which are definitions of 'person'.

B. "Polytheism" of St. Palamas

2

Miaphysites often present blasphemy against St. Palamas and the Orthodox doctrine of Theosis, calling the Saint and the doctrine polytheist.

In truth, both Roman Catholics and miaphysites fall into the same misinterpretation of St. Palamas, saying that believing in our form of Essence-Energy Distinction (EED) leads to Polytheism and that we believe in a lesser deity. The main quote by St. Palamas that is used by Orientals is "we become uncreated", taking this completely out of context and saying it means we become God. This is not the Orthodox teaching. Our belief, as also said by St. Athanasius the Great, "God became man so that man may become God."⁷ This is not to say that we, man by nature, become God, but that through the Energies of God we are brought into perfect

communion with Him. Also, believing in EED is not Polytheism, as ‘God’ is a title and not the literal name of God. The Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Spirit is God, the Trinity is God, the divine essence is God, and the Energies are God. No miaphysite would say that using the term ‘Persons’ in the Trinity is “Polytheism”, so what sense could it possibly make to call believing in this distinction Polytheism? Should we name believers of Absolute Divine Simplicity (ADS) Hindus, because an argument can be made that partaking in the divine essence of God through the Eucharist is reminiscent of the Hindu concept of Brahman? No; this is a poor argument in bad faith.

3

Now, let’s look more into what St. Palamas himself said, specifically in his work of *The Triads*. Firstly, St. Palamas defines Theosis from the Orthodox view as follows:

...the purified and illuminated mind, when clearly *participating in the grace of God*, also beholds other mystical and supernatural visions – for in seeing itself, it sees more than itself: It does not simply contemplate some other object, or simply its own image, but rather the glory impressed on its own image by the grace of God.... By this union, the mind sees God in the Spirit *in a manner transcending human powers*.... They [the Saints] purify themselves of evil passions and transcend all knowledge by uninterrupted and immaterial prayer, and it is then that they *begin to see God* (ch. D., s. 11).

In other words, Theosis is a life-long process of purification of the passions through unceasing prayer, fasting, partaking in the Holy Mysteries (e.g. Eucharist), and living like Christ and for Christ, out of true faith and desire to unite with God in a perfect communion after death. As the Bible says, we must “work out [our] own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in [us] both to will and to do for His good pleasure.” ⁸

The confusion comes from not knowing what Theosis is when it refers to us becoming ‘gods’. Not only do the Church Fathers refer to us as gods when talking about purification, but the Bible itself too, when it says, “You are *gods*,” (Psalm 82:6). Furthermore, miaphysites hold the claim of Polytheism due to St. Palamas saying this:

Yet the divine Maximus has not only taught that it is enhypostatic, but also that it is unoriginate (not only uncreated), indescribable and supratemporal. Those who attain it become thereby *uncreated, unoriginate*, and indescribable,

⁷ *On the Incarnation*, 54

⁸ Philippians 2:12-13

although in their own nature, they derive from nothingness (ch. E., s. 31).

How can humans be uncreated and unoriginate? Well, we ourselves are not without beginning, as that is not what St. Palamas is referring to. Instead, he again sticks to the theme of participating in the unoriginate Energies of God. On our own, we have nothing, so we aren't uncreated by our own nature, but by the grace of God, or by attaining deification through participation in the divine Energies. Therefore, we start to possess traits of being uncreated and unoriginate while not literally being so. St. Palamas then goes on to say how "the deifying gift of the Spirit thus cannot be equated with the superessential essence of God. It is the deifying energy of this divine essence, yet not the totality of this energy, even though it is indivisible in itself" (ch. E., s. 34). Although we are deified by the grace of God, it requires our constant cooperation as we strive for Theosis, and on our journey, the divine energy of the Spirit is present with us to the measure to which we are able to receive it individually. God does not force Theosis nor His grace upon us, as we must be willing to unite with God in such a way.

4

One might question; how do we not become God in essence when we are called gods? And how are we able to see God without being one with His essence? St. Palamas answers this question, simply saying, "None of us has ever defined a contemplative as one who has seen the Divine essence!" (ch. D., s. 12). Seeing God does not mean we literally see God's divinity, as it is immaterial. Seeing God is only possible when you go through the process of Theosis, and you start to desire the experience of God's light and perfect unity with Him. You start to will what God wills, until ultimately, God's will becomes your will and your will becomes God's will. Furthermore, we become God in divinity (state of being divinized, not literal divinity), not in essence. Being called God is, again, a title, and not the literal name of God. So when St. Palamas calls us gods, he means that through God's Energies, we are deified or transformed to be in the *likeness* of God, just as we were before the Fall of Man.

St. Palamas notes that "such union with God is thus beyond all knowledge" (s. 33), and that it is "indescribable and inconceivable even to those who behold it" (s. 35). The union with God is beyond knowledge, because God Himself is beyond knowledge, while we are not, hence why we do not literally become God.

This transformation does not change our humanity, as it is unique, and so are the Energies of God. In this way, Theosis can be seen in Christ, or rather, Christ made it possible when humanity and divinity united in Him. The difference is, Christ isn't just God in divinity, but also in essence/by common nature. Nevertheless, Theosis is made clear through the Christology of dyophysitism. Because, Christ, taking on a

human nature, redeemed all of humanity by deifying each and every action He did through His humanity (e.g. prayer and death), He trampled down the power of death through death itself and granted us the chance to partake in the Resurrection. Because of our partaking in the Resurrection, we are then granted the ability, by the grace of God, to become deified through His Energies. In a way, this means that when Christ died, we all did, and when Christ resurrected, we all did, partaking in His redemption given to us through the Holy Cross.

5

There is another and rather odd accusation by miaphysites, though definitely not as common as the previously stated ones. The accusation is as follows: for Chalcedonians, grace equates to Energies, which is wrong and does away with distinctions. This makes little sense, as the Orthodox do not assert this. In truth, we do not say that we use the Energies of God, as it is not our Energies, but that they are bestowed upon us. Either way, the accusation is, again, based upon misinterpreting and cherry picking St. Palamas, who said that we participate in the grace of God. But wait, don't we participate in the Energies of God, and not in His grace? So are we equating grace to Energies? Well, Energies don't all equate to each other, so grace cannot equal Energies. Otherwise, what distinction is there between Energies? The Energies are both actions and attributes. Being graceful is an attribute, bestowing grace is an action. Both are different Energies. Grace is distinct from love, inseparably. So the accusation has no basis, as it is based upon pulling out a single sentence from an entire work of St. Palamas, and misinterpreting it. It is also worth noting that the works of St. Palamas are normally heavy reads, so if you are not ready to read with an open mind or a guide, you are likely to read from a bias and therefore misinterpret, as we see with miaphysites.

III. Refutations of Common Statements

Miaphysite statements (S) from Orientals, and refutations (R) of those statements.

1

S: In miaphysitism, after the union, Christ remains one and the same Person, as His nature possesses 100% of divinity and 100% of humanity without mixture or confusion. It doesn't get rid of Christ's humanity or divinity like monophysitism does. There are still distinctions between the humanity and divinity of Christ, but they exist in an indivisible union.

R: Firstly, Christ limited Himself willingly to the boundaries of humanity while still remaining what He is by nature (divine essence) — God — therefore having 100% of divinity and 100% of humanity united in Him. This is possible in dyophysitism, but not in miaphysitism. On the surface, miaphysitism seems to make sense, as it is the closest sect to Orthodoxy. However, two complete opposites cannot exist in one nature without mingling. Realistically, divinity is bound to overpower humanity, and therefore swallow it. After all, how can humanity exist with 100% of its qualities when the divinity is greater than it is? In that way, miaphysitism does fall into monophysitism.

Something interesting is the fact that, in miaphysitism, the divinity also gets altered. It is not something miaphysites themselves believe, but that is what they fall into. They believe that pre-Incarnation, Christ had one divine nature in reality. Similarly, post-Incarnation, Christ had one nature but it was both divine and human. The divinity merged with the humanity into one nature, yet there was one divine nature before union. In that sense, the divinity changed, as it was no longer a distinct nature. We do not see this issue in dyophysitism, as the divine nature remained without alteration; it was simply united with the human nature through the Person of Christ.

Severus, in his *Letter to Sergius the Grammarian*, said that the difference of divinity and humanity remains without confusion, where one is created and the other uncreated. One must question how true that really is if the two natures are merged into one.

2

S: There is only one will in Christ, because the humanity doesn't act in contradiction to the divinity.

R: This does not mean that the will is one. Orientals themselves do not believe in numerical identity, but they still follow it by definition. Numerical identity necessitates that a union of different things must result in an output of one. This is

not always the case. The two natures and two wills in Christ acting as one does not mean they must identify as one. Otherwise, since the Trinity acts together, you could say there is no Trinity, and they're all one, not three in one. There is no consistency in this view.

3

S: The two natures are united together without confusion, resulting in the one will of the God Incarnate. Neither nature operates without the other. In verses that talk about Jesus speaking to the Father (such as Matthew 26:39) and submitting to His will, it's not just the human nature alone speaking but the divine nature too. If it was just the human nature alone, then that would imply that the Father and the Son have different wills, which would mean that the Holy Spirit also has a separate will.

R: The two natures are united together without confusion, making two separate wills act as one, therefore removing the separation. Neither nature operates without the other. In verses that talk about Jesus speaking to the Father and submitting to His will, it's the Person of Christ speaking and submitting the human will to the divine will. It is not the human nature alone speaking, as a nature in itself does not speak, otherwise that would either entail a second son in Christ or that Christ is solely man. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit all have one divine will of the Godhead, while Christ also took on a human will. A human will is not the will to do something contrary to God's will (sin), but the natural will to do blameless passions (e.g. you feel hunger so you will to eat). Therefore, Christ having a human will does not in any way separate Him from the will of the Godhead.

4

S: Non Chalcedonians say the same thing as Chalcedonians, just in reverse. One nature does not deny the two united natures of Christ, and the two natures of Christ do not deny that Christ is one Person.

R: This is a very ecumenical statement. On the surface, yes, we do agree. But truth isn't just surface level, otherwise Islam and Hinduism would be the same as Christianity because we all claim to believe in one single God — Brahman, Allah, Triune God. There must be an objective truth, and it is not inclusive. As we have discussed in this paper, miaphysitism falls into heresies like monophysitism.

5

S: Severus, in his Fourth Epistle to Gaius, says, "...He was not a man, not as 'not being man', but as 'being from men was beyond men', and was above man, having truly been born man, and for the rest, not having done things divine as God, nor things human as man, but exercising for us a certain new theandric energy of God having become man." This is in the sense that we are merely men, whereas Christ is

God-who-is-man, so His humanity is deified – not dissolved, but transfigured for those who participate in God’s grace.

R: The sentiment in the above miaphysite commentary has no issue, however, the statement from Severus itself does, as Christ did do actions according to both natures. For example, Christ did not pray through His divine nature. God the Word was not separated from the Trinity with the need to pray to communicate with the Father and the Spirit. Also, Christ did not resurrect through His human nature, as the Theotokion of the Sixth Hour says, “...didst endure crucifixion, and as God didst show forth the Resurrection.”

6

S: A nature is a concrete individual reality, and every individual reality must have its own identity (person) to distinguish it from others. The only way that there can be two natures in one person is by homonym (under a common name).

R: Again, this is a typical confusion of being too general over the use of terms. A concrete individual reality is the definition for a person, not a nature. Two natures being united only under a common name is Nestorianism, not dyophysitism, as we do not claim that unity is in the natures, but in Christ instead. He is the unifying force, so both natures are united under a common Person, not just under a common name.

7

S: For something to be composite, it must have two sets of properties. A nature cannot be both if it is not composed of different things. A nature would be composed of different things; one out of both. Contrary attributes would only be an issue if we said a man is simple and not composite but still has properties of both body and soul.

R: Once again this is conflating the term “nature” with that of hypostasis.

υπό = under στάσις = a standing υπόστασις = Hypostasis

Hypostasis literally means “standing under” or substantive reality, that which has actual existence. It is an individual nature (e.g. divine nature), not a common nature (e.g. divine essence).

8

S: The natural qualities exist after the union, so using the soul and body analogy, when someone slaps you across the face, does your soul hurt or your face? Your face hurts and not your soul, because its incapability to experience pain remains unharmed.

R: This does not relate to one nature out of two, nor does it refute the two natures after the union. The body being mutable and the soul being immutable are

attributes to those two elements or natures individually. It does not prove that the divine and human natures didn't mix in the one nature.

9

S: There are two natures in contemplation, not in reality. The mind divides Christ into two natures, but after the union, that division is done away with, though distinction naturally remains.

R: This is what St. Cyril has professed, but by natures he meant persons, as he was saying that in response to Arians and Nestorians. This is not to say that, in thought, we are Nestorian, professing two persons in Christ, but that a divine nature is attributed to God and a human nature is attributed to man, hence why it is "in contemplation". In reality, however, there is one Son, the Word Incarnate, who united God to man by taking on both natures in the fullness of their attributes in the one Person of Christ.

10

S: Is the authority of Councils the final authority? Orthodoxy doesn't equate to seven Councils.

R: The authority of Councils may not be the final authority, but it is an infallible one. There are multiple authorities inside of the Church: The Consensus of the Fathers, the Holy Councils, Holy Tradition passed down from the Apostles and their successors, and so on. To say we only view the seven Councils as authoritative is ignorant at best and disingenuous at worst.

11

S: Eastern Orthodox in person are more accepting of miaphysitism than Eastern Orthodox online.

R: Some Orthodox in person are the very Orthodox people that you talk to online. Nevertheless, normally, online they have a higher interest in theological research, whereas in person they have more of a focus on spiritual aspects, so they are more accepting, because they don't know as much about the theology of Orientals; they just know the surface level basics which do seem to be in accordance with Orthodoxy. This is especially common amongst cradles (those baptized at birth).

IV. Commentary on Pope Shenouda III - *The Nature Of Christ*

Shenouda's statements (A) and our comment (B) on those statements.

Because we have spoken about Oriental beliefs more in depth previously, we will comment on Shenouda's statements more shortly; in his book "The Nature of Christ".

1

A: The expression 'One Nature' does not indicate the divine nature alone nor the human nature alone, but it indicates the unity of both natures into One Nature, which is 'The Nature of the Incarnate Logos.'

B: The nature of the Incarnate Logos is the divine essence of the God Incarnate.

2

A: St. Cyril the Great taught us not to talk about two natures after their unity.

B: This is because there are not two persons, but only one after the Incarnation in reality. The one Person possesses all properties belonging to a man and to God, but not two separate essences, as there is one.

3

A: We can say that the divine nature united hypostatically with the human nature within the Virgin's womb, but after this unity we do not speak again about two natures of Christ. In fact, the expression "two natures" implies in itself division or separation, and although those who believe in "the two natures" admit unity, the tone of separation was obvious in the Council of Chalcedon.

B: Again, by this logic, the Trinity implies division as well. As said previously, hypostasis means person, so if one says the divine nature hypostatically united to the human nature, then that would entail a union in Christ, again making Him the unifying force and not the natures themselves. In addition, Chalcedon re-anathematized Nestorius and heretics alongside him because professing two sons is division.

4

A: Nestorius' concept meant that Christ became a dwelling for God just as He became a dwelling for the Holy Spirit through His Baptism.... He explicitly said: "I distinguish between the two natures."

B: If this is what miaphysites accuse the Orthodox of, then we advise them to read, or reread, the sessions of the Council of Chalcedon. If we look at what was professed and what was condemned, Nestorius associated one nature as having necessarily one hypostasis and one essence, so two natures to him necessitated two persons and two essences. That is not what dyophysitism is.

5

A: *Eutyches said that the human nature was absorbed and dissolved in the divine nature as a drop of vinegar in the ocean. In this way, he denied the human nature of Christ.*

B: The human nature is like a drop of vinegar in the ocean to the divine nature when they become one single nature, so although Orientals do not believe in Eutychianism/monophysitism, that is what they essentially fall into. Dyophysitism does not have this issue, as the divine nature is not merged with the human nature to that extent, but is united with it in the Person of Christ.

6

A: *Surely, divinity is not susceptible to suffering, but when the human nature underwent suffering, it was united with the divine nature. Thus pain was inflicted upon this one Nature. This explains why the Creed set by the Holy Council of Nicea says, "The Only-Begotten Son of God descended from heaven, was Incarnate and became man and was crucified for our sake in the reign of Pilate, suffered and was buried and rose from the dead." There is a great difference between saying that the human nature alone, apart from the divine nature, suffered, and that the Incarnate Only-Begotten Son was crucified, suffered, and was buried and rose from the dead.*

B: Firstly, Shenouda says that pain was inflicted upon the one nature — so the divine nature suffered too, yet Shenouda himself says that it cannot suffer. If the one nature, possessing both humanity and divinity, suffered, then Christ is not God, as He would not be truly divine since His divinity did experience suffering, therefore so did His essence. This would mean that the whole Godhead experienced pain. Secondly, the Creed never talks about one nature of Christ. The quoted excerpt from the Creed does not say the nature suffered, but that the Person of Christ suffered in His humanity, not in His divinity.

7

A: *He, the man, united with the Godhead, physically died and His death provided unlimited atonement.*

A2: Just a page earlier, Shenouda said: *...but the Tome of Leo also says that Christ is two: God and man.*

B: Shenouda proceeded to accuse the Orthodox of proclaiming two sons in Christ, because we say Christ is both God and man. Yet right after, Shenouda himself affirms that Christ was both God and man. In fact, you can easily take what Shenouda said out of context and assume he is speaking of two sons. Is that not what he himself did here?

8

A: If the first aim of the Incarnation is redemption, and redemption cannot be fulfilled through the human nature alone, faith in the One Nature of the Incarnate Logos is an essential and undeniable matter. Redemption cannot be fulfilled if we say that the human nature alone underwent suffering, crucifixion, blood-shedding and death.

B: Again, actions of the human nature are done by the Person of Christ, not by the human nature itself. The Person of Christ suffered in His humanity, and He died in His humanity. If you say Christ died in His one nature, then you are saying that Christ also died in His divinity, meaning Christ is finite and mortal, therefore not God.

9

A: Thus, the One sacrificed by God is the Son, the Only Begotten Son, that is, the Second Hypostasis (Person) of the Holy Trinity; the Logos. The Bible does not say that He sacrificed His humanity or anything of the kind, although He died on the cross with His human body, this is clear proof of the One Nature of God the Logos, and herein is the importance of this unity for the act of redemption.

B: This is a great example of a miaphysite Pope, to whom many Orientals look up to based on his theological outlook, using the term ‘hypostasis’ interchangeably. You must thank him for defining it in parentheses, however, if he did not, one could assume, by Oriental Christological use of hypostasis, that he said that Christ is one of three natures in the Triad. Moreover, as said above, it is not the human nature, nor the “one nature” as the Orientals say, that is carrying out these actions — it is Christ Himself. So what proof of the one nature is there in the Bible, besides misinterpretation of it and misrepresentation of dyophysitism? What redemption is there if not Christ but His one mia-nature is what caused and carried the unity?

10

A: St. Peter says to the Jews: “But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for murderer to be granted unto you and killed the Prince of Life.” (Acts 3:14, 15). Here he confirms that the One crucified was the “Prince of Life”, a term which denotes divinity. St. Peter never separated the two natures or facts involved in the crucifixion, due to the importance of their unity for the enactment of redemption.

B: Again, our redeemer is Jesus Christ Himself, not His supposedly one mia-nature. He redeemed us by uniting the divine nature to the human nature in Himself. It is true that St. Peter never separated the two natures, otherwise he would be

talking about a unity of two natures only under a common name. However, one of the many names of Jesus, “Prince of Life,” is not a profession of one nature in Christ, as Shenouda professes, but who Christ is based on His divinity. Again, Christ’s human nature alone didn’t die, the Person of Christ died in His humanity, hence why the Jews “killed the Prince of Life.”

11

A: If the expression “Son of Man” means (or denotes) the human nature, and “the Lord of the Sabbath” denotes the divine nature, then being put together in one statement is another proof of the One Nature.⁹

B: How Shenouda and the miaphysites interpret Bible verses in support of miaphysitism resembles a categorical mistake. The reference to Christ being both God and man in one sentence does not imply one nature in Him, but simply shows that He is both God and man; divine and human. You cannot attribute everything the Bible mentions about Christ’s divinity and humanity to a single nature, otherwise His nature is what redeemed us, which would in turn mean that you believe in another son in Christ; one being our redeemer, while the other not. Instead, what the Bible tells us from verses like these is that there is a divine nature, as well as a human nature, in Christ, and the attributes of both are ascribed to Christ because He is the God-man, or God Incarnate.

12

A: Hence, since He [the Son] is one with the Godhead, then He is essentially one with Him [the Father] concerning His will. Again, the Son, in His Incarnation on earth, was fulfilling the Will of the heavenly Father. Thus it must be that He Who united with the manhood had One Will. In fact, sin is nothing but a conflict between man’s will and God’s. But remember that our Lord Jesus Christ had no sin at all.

B: Christ was indeed carrying out the will of the Father, as Christ is God Himself. However, the human will is not naturally sinful, especially in Christ who redeemed it. Christ took on a corrupt human nature, meaning He willingly was subject to the blameless passions, like feeling tired so He slept, or weeping because He felt sadness in His humanity. However, Christ did not have the inclination to sin because of His divinity, as God cannot sin. He did not have a gnostic will, because by redeeming humanity He also redeemed the will, producing a natural will (a perfect will in accordance with God’s will). He had the will to do naturally good things without deliberation. Therefore, Christ having a human will alongside the divine will of the Godhead would not be contradicting. Orientals, unfortunately, associate a human will with sin, much like the Roman Catholics, the difference being that

⁹ Matthew 12:8

Orientalists exclude the human will from Christ. In addition, if Christ only has one will out of two, which happens to be the will of God, then the Triad's will is from a divine will and a human will, making not only Christ man, but the Father and the Holy Spirit too since they share the one will with Christ.

13

Note: Miaphysites do claim that it is the Incarnate Logos that carried out the divine and human actions. However, they misrepresent dyophysitism by claiming that we affirm that the human nature alone or the divine nature alone carried out actions, and not Christ Himself. However, we hope that you can see how many times we had to repeat the fact that Christ is the one carrying out these actions in response to the claims of Shenouda and the miaphysites, who said it is the one nature doing these actions.

V. On Church Fathers

A: St. Cyril and Cyrillian Miaphysitism

1

Miaphysites highly venerate St. Cyril of Alexandria, as he is a pre-Nicene Church father who used the term ‘one nature’. The difference is what he meant by that.

In his *Letter 44 to Eulogius the Priest*, St. Cyril says the following:

If, then, we speak of a union, we are confessing a union of flesh animated with a rational soul and the Word, and those who speak of two natures are thinking thus also. *Yet once we confess the union*, those things which have been united are no longer separate from each other, but then there is *one Son, and His nature is one as the Word made flesh*. The bishops from the East confess these doctrines, *even though they are somewhat obscure concerning the expression*.

Where is the contention here between this quote by St. Cyril and Orthodox theology? Orthodox confess the union, and that there is one Son with two natures that are *not* separated, however they *are distinct*. We do not believe that there are two hypostases (hypostasis is not synonymous with physis) in the person of Christ, which is what miaphysites accuse dyophysites of. On the contrary, with Orientals refusing to differentiate the different terms used by the Church, they tend to fall into the same heresies they are trying to advocate against. Some blur the line and say that Christ, in His supposed mia-nature, is consubstantial with both the Father and with us. Is this not on the line of blasphemy? Saying that we as mere men are consubstantial with the Father is ignorant to God’s transcendence. Another thing to note is, when St. Cyril says that Christ’s “nature is one as the Word made flesh”, he refers to the “One Incarnate nature of God the Word.” In other words, it is the common nature Incarnate. St. Cyril repeats this in his letters to Succensus to emphasize the unity between the natures. Similarly, he often expressed that there is one nature of/from two, because he wanted to make it undoubtedly clear that there is only one Person in Christ after the Hypostatic Union. In other words, he’d stress the single subjectivity of the Person of Christ. Dyophysitism does not deny this.

As it is said,

For Cyril, physis means a concrete individual acting as subject in its own right and according to its own natural properties. Thus, the One Nature of God the Logos Incarnate, having by His second birth appropriated to Himself a perfect, complete and real Manhood, has as His own both the ousia and natural properties common to all men, whereby it is the Logos Himself who is Christ and lives really and truly the life of man without any change whatsoever in His divinity, having remained what He always was.¹⁰

Essentially, this usage of St. Cyril's "one nature" is dyophysite and is ultimately compatible with Chalcedonian Christology.

2

In like manner, in his *Letter to Succensus*, the Saint says the following:

Therefore, as far as concerns our understanding and only the contemplation by the eyes of the soul in what manner the only begotten became man, *we say that there are two natures which are united, but that Christ the Son and Lord is one*, the Word of God the Father made man and Incarnate. And, *if it seems best, let us accept as an example the composition in our own selves by which we are men*. For we are composed of soul and body and we see two natures, the one being the nature of the body and the other the nature of the soul, but there is one from both in unity, *a man*. And because *man is composed of two natures, this does not make two men be one, but one and the same man through the composition*, as I said, of soul and body.

Dyophysitism affirms the fact that there are two united natures in Christ, and that Christ is One. As the example by St. Cyril states, we too have two natures, one of our soul and one of our body. Even though these two natures maintain their properties and distinctions, they are still one in our hypostasis, the concrete or substantive reality of who we are. So we are composed of two natures, and yet we are only one single reality with both a body and soul. This analogy cannot apply to miaphysitism, as Christ took on the fullness of our substantive reality, which is a human nature to Him, but He also possesses the divine nature. If soul and body, for us humans, make up a human nature relative to us, how can this be so? They have opposing traits, undying and dying, health and sickness, etc. Which did Christ redeem? Did He redeem the undying or dying, the health or the sickness? Rather, He redeemed

¹⁰ Orthodox Joint Commission, "One Physis or Hypostasis of God the Logos Incarnate"

both, as He took on the fullness of our reality, and the fullness of our being.

3

Furthermore, as a reply in his *Letter 40 to Acacius*, St. Cyril expresses:

Wherefore, we say that the two natures were united, *from which there is the one and only Son and Lord, Jesus Christ*, as we accept in our thoughts; but after the union, since the distinction into two is now done away with, we believe that there is *one nature of the Son*.

Again, in this context, he is saying that after the Hypostatic Union, there is only one Son, not two.

Monophysites would accuse St. Cyril of Nestorianism for defending the two natures doctrine. The context around this letter and the *Letter to Father Eulogius* show this:

Some attack the exposition of faith which those from the East have made and ask, *'For what reason did the Bishop of Alexandria endure or even praise those who say that there are two natures?'* Those who hold the same teachings as Nestorius say that he thinks the same thing too, snatching to their side those who do not understand precision. But it is necessary to say the following to those who are accusing me, namely, that it is not necessary to flee and avoid everything which heretics say, for they confess many of the things which we confess. For example, when the Arians say that the Father is the creator and Lord of all, does it follow that we avoid such confessions? Thus *also is the case of Nestorius, even if he says there are two natures signifying the difference of the flesh and the Word of God, for the nature of the Word is one nature and the nature of His flesh is another, but Nestorius does not any longer confess the union as we do.*

4

St. Cyril's *Letter 40 to Acacius*:

And according to this and only this is the difference of natures, that is, of hypostases, to be understood, for divinity and humanity are doubtless *not the same in natural quality*. Otherwise how has the Word, being God, emptied Himself having lowered Himself in lesser things, that is, to our condition? Accordingly, whenever the manner of the Incarnation is closely considered,

the human mind doubtless sees the two ineffably and unconfusedly joined to each other in a union; but the mind in no wise divides them after they have been united, but believes and admits strongly that the *one from both is God and Son and Christ and Lord*.

St. Cyril is saying that the natures are different in terms of hypostases, but they retain their natural qualities, so they're one in Christ's Hypostasis while retaining the fact that they are two natures. In other words, St. Cyril is saying that the Logos and human nature were distinct in contemplation pre-Incarnation, but post-Incarnation that distinction in the mind is done away with, as they are not separate realities. He is also saying that God and man are not the same in nature, because God voluntarily lowered Himself to take on our humanity.

For miaphysites, the mention of one Incarnate Nature/Hypostasis always implies one divine-human nature in Christology, yet they themselves admit St. Cyril uses the term 'nature' interchangeably to mean the divine essence, person, or a human nature/divine nature specifically, depending on the context. In this context, it is clear that St. Cyril means persons, or more specifically what pertains to them. Most of the time, he would mean persons when thinking about the Hypostatic Union, since it literally means a union (of natures) in one Person/Hypostasis.

5

From examining how St. Cyril uses the term 'one nature', we can conclude that natural qualities are associated with a specific hypostasis (e.g. immortality with God and mortality with man). So in contemplation, before the union, our mind hypothetically divides two natures into two persons, as divine natural qualities are distinct from human ones. This is not to say that there were literally two persons before the union, as there was only one nature eternally, that being the divine. Nevertheless, after the union, that division is done away with, and therefore we do not say there are two persons and essences, but two natures in the one Person of Christ.

B: Council of Chalcedon

6

Oriental, as they reject Chalcedon, often accuse the Council of rejecting the definitions of the Council of Ephesus, as well as that of St. Cyril. Those that throw around such accusations likely have not even read the sessions of Chalcedon. If they have, they would know that multiple documents of St. Cyril were recited, such as the following *Letter to John of Antioch*:

We confess, therefore, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, perfect God, and perfect Man of a reasonable soul and flesh consisting;

begotten before the ages of the Father according to His divinity, and in the last days, for us and for our salvation, of Mary the Virgin according to His humanity, of the *same substance with His Father* according to His divinity, and of the *same substance with us* according to His humanity; for there became a *union of two natures*. Wherefore we confess *one Christ, one Son, one Lord*.

This is a confession of one Person in Christ. Substance in this case refers to that which is common to all particulars, or a common essence; the “what-ness” (not a single particular). St. John of Damascus elaborates on this when he says that “individuals coming under the same most specific species” are “of the same substance, of the same nature, of the same species...” (*Fountain of Knowledge, Ch. 41*). Christ has a common substance with us in His humanity, and He has a common substance with the Godhead in His divinity. Because Christ derives His essence from the Father by being begotten by Him, He is consubstantial with the Father in nature and in essence. This is not to say that Christ has a separate essence, because if that was the case, then Christ would either be only redeeming His human essence and not ours, or there would be two persons in Him, like Nestorianism teaches. As Christ is a God-man, divinity entails God and humanity entails man, where each has its own essence common to its species. So Christ is the bridge between humanity and divinity due to Him possessing both. Just because St. Cyril says “humanity” and “divinity” instead of “human nature” and “divine nature”, it does not mean he is speaking of a singular nature in Christ, otherwise, why would his works be recited in Chalcedon, and why would the preceding bishops call it the true faith?

Note: We are not consubstantial with the Father, though miaphysites often teach that we are, or rather they fall into it by putting humanity and divinity into one nature.

The Saint continues to elaborate on this thought in the same letter:

But I am far from any such thought as that, and I also consider them wholly to rave who think a shadow of change could occur concerning the *Nature of the Word of God*. For He *remains* that which He *always was*, and *has not been changed*, nor can He ever be changed, nor is He capable of change.

The nature of the Word of God is divine, as being unchangeable eternally is an attribute of God, not man, so this one nature cannot entail a one mia-nature, because that would require the humanity in Christ to also be unchangeable. This poses another problem for the Orientals — If 100% of humanity in the one mia-nature is prone to change, while the 100% of divinity is not able to change,

does this not signify two persons in Christ? A nature has to contain a consistent set of properties, which are proper to its concrete reality. A single nature cannot possess contradicting traits simultaneously. If Christ truly possesses 100% of properties of each physis without mixing, then there is no real fusion into one single nature. Also, in his fourth anathema, St. Cyril said that anyone who “divides between two prosopa or hypostases” and attributes properties exclusively to God or to a separate man, let him be anathema. The unity is in the Person of Christ.

Furthermore, in the same letter, St. Cyril states that Christ “is unchanging and unchangeable according to nature....” Why would Chalcedon directly cite this if St. Cyril confirms one nature in Christ? Well, St. Cyril only speaks of the divine nature or essence here. The divine nature is indeed unchangeable, but the human nature is not, as it got corrupted by the Fall of Man, where the image of God in man got altered negatively through the consequences of sin, though not destroyed. If St. Cyril was talking about the one mia-nature, then that would either mean that humanity was always pure, or that the divinity caused the humanity in Christ to become unchangeable, therefore free of the consequences of sin (i.e. death).

He further expressed that Christ “is also called the Man from heaven, being *perfect in His divinity and perfect in his Humanity*, and considered as *in one Person*. For *one* is the Lord Jesus Christ, although the *difference of His natures is not unknown, from which we say the ineffable union was made.*” Again, you must remember that this was quoted in Chalcedon, so the argument that Chalcedon went against the teachings of St. Cyril has no true basis. Nevertheless, St. Cyril is clearly talking about Christ being one Person, or the two common essences being in one Person. He makes this clear by repeating that Christ is one. Now, of course, every what-ness has its wholeness of reality. In other words, each essence (nature, not ousia) has its own particular person (hypostasis), so two natures came from two opposites in essence, and the union of two natures occurred in the one Person of Christ.

There is nothing in this Letter that entails one physis in Christ, as that is not what St. Cyril meant. The misinterpretation comes from the miaphysite confusion of semantics.

Session V of Chalcedon summarizes what St. Cyril meant by Christ being no longer two after the union:

...it repels from the sacred assembly those who dare to say that the Godhead of the Only Begotten is capable of suffering; it resists those who imagine a *mixture or confusion of the two natures of Christ*; it drives away those who

fancy His form of a servant is of a heavenly or some substance other than that which was taken of us, and it *anathematizes those who foolishly talk of two natures of our Lord before the union, conceiving that after the union there was only one.*

It is quite obvious that Chalcedon affirmed St. Cyril's teaching that there are two separate natures before the union only in thought, not in reality, and that after the union that division is done away with. In other words, as mentioned before, in thought, a divine nature pertains to God and a human nature pertains to man. Yet, Christ being a Person who is a God-man, He possessed both without being two sons. Unfortunately, many still decide to call this Nestorian. To no surprise, the denial of truth leads to more heresies. Would one really be surprised if a person called Chalcedon miaphysite for saying there is one nature after the union? Just as we are not surprised that people call Chalcedon Nestorian for talking about two natures!

The bishops of Chalcedon never denied St. Cyril, as their reaction was this:

And when these letters [i.e. Cyril's letter to Nestorius and his letter to John of Antioch] had been read, the most reverend bishops cried out: We all so believe: Pope Leo thus believes: anathema to him who divides and to him who confounds: ... such is our faith: this is the mind of Archbishop Leo, so he believes, so he has written.

7

As the bishops said, the faith of St. Cyril is the faith of St. Leo. The dyophysitism of St. Leo is evident in his *Tome* to St. Flavian, which was read at Chalcedon and accepted by the preceding bishops as the true faith. The document read, "For we count none have overcome the author of sin and of death, unless He who could neither be contaminated by sin, nor detained by death, had taken upon Himself *our nature, and made it His own.*"

As mentioned previously, Christ took our gnostic will (after the Fall) and turned it into a natural human will as it was before the Fall — not susceptible to sin as it has been perfected. There is no issue with Christ possessing a human nature, because His human nature, having a natural will, submitted to the divine will as it was always meant to. This is what a perfect union also means; the human nature fully submits to the divine nature without confusion, mixture, or division. It also correlates with theosis, as its ultimate goal is for humanity to fully submit to divinity without the humanity being dissolved by the divinity.

Furthermore, St. Leo goes on to explain that Christ is of a different nature from the Theotokos, or rather that He has one divine nature. He said, "...therefore the *flesh of Him* whom she conceived was *not of the nature of her who conceived Him*." The Theotokos gave birth to Christ in the flesh, so through her, the union happened. The flesh (human nature) derived from the Theotokos belonged to Christ, but Christ is naturally of a different nature from the Theotokos, as He is divine by nature/essence. While miaphysites accuse St. Leo of Nestorianism, they do so by cherry picking parts of the *Tome*, such as the quote above, and misinterpreting what St. Leo actually meant.

As for distinctions between the two natures in Christ, the *Tome* says the following:

Accordingly while the *distinctness of both natures and substances was preserved, and both met in one Person*, lowliness was assumed by majesty, weakness by power, mortality by eternity; and, in order to pay the debt of our condition, the inviolable nature was united to the passible, so that as the appropriate remedy for our ills, one and the same "Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus," *might from one element be capable of dying and also from the other be incapable*. Therefore in the *entire and perfect nature of very man was born very God, whole in what was his, whole in what was ours*. By "ours" we mean what the Creator formed in us at the beginning and what He assumed in order to restore; for of that which the deceiver brought in, and man, thus deceived, admitted, there was not a trace in the Saviour; *and the fact that He took on Himself a share in our infirmities did not make Him a partaker in our transgressions*. He assumed "the form of a servant" *without the defilement of sin, enriching what was human, not impairing what was divine*.

We do not deny the phrase "in one nature", as St. Cyril used it to say "in one Person", just like St. Leo. Not only that, but the distinctions of natures and *substances* met in the one Hypostasis of Christ, while the division of them was done away with. Christ assumed the fullness of humanity, which united the divine nature with the human nature, as well as the attributes of both. This union does not divide, as the human nature in its wholeness was made perfect through Christ and His divine nature. This did not alter the divine nature, because Christ experienced pain and death not in His divinity but in the weakness of His humanity. It also did not alter the human nature, but renewed it to its original uncorrupted state. This cannot be so for miaphysitism, because if Christ has only one nature, where the humanity assumed was truly the same as ours (otherwise no redemption), then by nature

Christ is defiled by sin, because the unity necessitates the assumption of a corrupt human nature.

The *Tome* also specifies, “For as ‘God’ is not changed by the compassion [exhibited], so ‘Man’ is not consumed by the dignity [bestowed]. For each ‘form’ does the *acts which belong to it, in communion with the other...*” Neither nature is consumed or changed by the other, as the divine nature is Incarnate through the human nature, and the human nature is renewed by the divine nature. This is because the human acts and the divine acts are done by Christ in perfect communion with each other/without contradiction. If this was not the case, then theosis would not be possible. Similarly, St. Leo writes:

For although *in the Lord Jesus Christ there is one Person of God and man*, yet that whereby contumely attaches to both is one thing, and that whereby glory attaches to both is another; for from what belongs to us He has that manhood which is inferior to the Father; while from the Father He has equal Godhead with the Father. Accordingly, on account of this unity of Person which is to be understood as existing in both the natures....

Here, according to context, St. Leo talks about Christ being composite and two-fold. This means that there are different operations pertaining to His distinct natures. A couple sentences back, St. Leo states:

Accordingly, He who, as man, is tempted by the devil’s subtlety, is the same to whom, as God, angels pay duteous service. To hunger, to thirst, to be weary, and to sleep, is evidently human. But to satisfy five thousand men with five loaves, and give to the Samaritan woman that living water... is unquestionably divine. ...it does not belong to the same nature to weep with feelings of pity over a dead friend and... raise him up to life again; or to hang on the wood, and to make all the elements tremble after daylight had been turned into night... so it does not belong to the same nature to say, “I and the Father are one,” and to say, “the Father is greater than I.”

Attaching contemuley and glory to both is implying the single subjectivity within Christ. Glorifying a human operation (proper to His human nature) is also glorifying the Godhead, because both natures subsist within the one Person of Christ (single subject), who is the second Person of the Godhead (Logos).

If the above is Nestorian, then miaphysitism is monophysitism, because miaphysites agree with the following statement, which was said by Eutyches: "I

confess that *our Lord was of two natures before the union, but after the union I confess one nature.*" The Council of Chalcedon comments on this claim, saying, "...it is as impious to say that the Only-begotten Son of God was of two natures before the Incarnation as it is shocking to affirm that, since the Word became flesh, there has been in Him one nature only." As we stated previously, a union of different things does not necessarily equate to a result of one thing. This is true only for the fact that the division of two natures (and therefore two persons in thought) is done away with, but the distinction remains. Just as there was one Person before the union, there is one Person after the union.

It is interesting to mention that when asked, "which would you follow, the most holy Leo or Dioscorus?", the bishops answered, "We believe as Leo. Those who contradict are Eutychians. Leo has rightly expounded the faith." The Council called Dioscorus and his followers Eutychian, or monophysite, as his theology falls into that.

Besides, St. Leo does not in any way contradict St. Cyril, nor any Church Fathers alongside him. The bishop, realizing this, asked, "This is the faith of the fathers. Why were not these things read at Ephesus [i.e. at the heretical synod held there]? These are the things Dioscorus hid away." Dioscorus refused to allow St. Flavian to present the same points during the Robber Council of Ephesus, as we know Dioscorus overrode and silenced the voice of the dyophysites. Yet, we believe just as the bishop in Chalcedon believed — they did not condemn the term of one nature as it denoted one Person, but they condemned a single divine nature or a single human nature in Christ, or two natures before union and one nature after the union.

C: Fathers on the One Nature in Christ

8

Here, we simply quote the Fathers speaking of one nature (A), and present our commentary (B).

St. Basil of Caesarea, Against Eunomius IV

A: In all this we do not speak of two, God alone and a man alone (for they are one), but we consider the nature of each conceptually.

B: In other words, we do not speak of the Word as one person and a man as another person in reality, but we consider the nature of each person in thought before the union.

On the Incarnation: St. Mark the Ascetic of Egypt, Mark's "Doctrinal Treatise"

A: As a result, Christ, composed of both natures, became mediator between God and humanity [1 Tim 2.5]. May He be conceived of as sole Son of God and believed in at every moment and in every place and through every powerful act and deed, in accordance with Holy Scripture. To Christ be the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

B: Miaphysites claim that Christ is of two natures but is in one nature, but here St. Mark is saying that, yes, Christ is of two natures (each nature pertains to a person conceptually) and is one Person, so the natural qualities pertaining to either God or man are united in Christ, which lets Him be the sole mediator between God and us.

St. Theodotus of Ancyra, Exposition of the Nicene Creed, 7

*A: You will not ascend to God, O man, unless you confess the descent of God. Paul says, "One is He who descended and He who ascended." Not one and another, but the same is no longer divided, no longer considered two after the union. For "He who ascended," he says, "is also He who ascended above men, so that he might fill all things." The things once contemplated two, the *economia* made one. So then, no longer say two after the indissoluble union. What grace united, let thought not divide.*

*B: "The things once contemplated two, the *economia* made one" — the *economia* refers to Persons in the Trinity, not natures. So the last sentence — "What grace has united, let thought not divide" — means that, although our mind may divide Christ into two persons who are man and God (in thought), because each nature can be attributed to either God or man, let this not divide what grace has united (in reality). So in thought, Christ being of two natures pre-Incarnation refers to the fact that every nature possesses its hypostasis, but in reality, there is only one Person and one nature in Christ, and to think otherwise is division.*

There are other instances where the Fathers speak of one nature in Christ, but the preached theme is the same. We hope that you understand why the Orthodox Church sticks to mostly defining terminology more precisely like the Cappadocians did, instead of referring to one nature.

VI. Question-Answer-Rebuttal

A. Introduction

1

To help us better understand miaphysite core beliefs, we presented miaphysites with a series of questions, and we summarized their collective answers in short below. Following their answers, we provided short rebuttals, which we hope you find helpful. From our discussion with the Orientals, there appears to be a variety of answers, yet neither Oriental disagreed with the other. Although there was no total unity in how they responded to our questions, they all stuck to professing one nature in Christ.

Please note the format: Our questions (→), Oriental answers (◦), our short rebuttals (□).

B. Q&A

2

→ How can the Incarnate Nature have contradicting traits?

◦ *It's a composite nature. For something to be composite, it has to be a union of completely unlike parts. Each person has one nature, and a nature is a concrete reality. Plus, each nature has its own person.*

□ Saying a union must achieve oneness is limiting God, putting Him in a frame of expectation which He clearly exceeds. Nature is not a concrete reality, Person/Hypostasis is. It is true each nature has its hypostasis, but using miaphysite logic, this would mean miaphysites are Nestorian by saying there were two natures in contemplation pre-Incarnation; it would mean there is a need for two persons in contemplation also.

→ If it does have contradicting traits, can the divinity die? If not, where is the unity found, in the nature or in the Person?

◦ *It can have contradicting traits because: "When the discussion has considered closely what elements have come together to become, or to compose the single person and nature, or hypostasis..." (St. Cyril of Alexandria to the Bishops of Oriens).*

□ This is just referring to an individual being composite.

◦ *The unity is both in the nature and in the Person.*

□ If unity is in the nature, then that's the nature doing contradicting things to itself. That is Nestorian because natures

have their own hypostasis, as they have stated. And if unity is in the Person, then the natures would not be one nature, and it would equate to dyophysitism. It is a union of natures in the Person.

3

→ Is your view of theopaschism that the divine nature suffered? If it's that the whole Person suffered, then that is yes.

◦ *We don't believe in it. Christ suffered in the flesh/in His humanity, not in His divinity.*

□ If it is through the humanity that Christ suffered, where is the unity in the Incarnation found if the nature is doing contradicting things? *No concrete answer was given.*

→ If suffering is in the whole nature of Christ through the humanity, but there is still one nature, how does the divinity not suffer? *No concrete answer was given.*

4

→ Clarify definitions of nature and hypostasis. Are they the same or different? If they are different, how do they differ?

◦ *Nature refers to some substantial reality, whether an essence or hypostasis. Hypostasis refers to a particular reality. Nature is a broad term encompassing both essence and hypostasis, though essence and hypostasis never mean the other. In Triadology, nature means God's essence or person, depending on the context. In Christology, it means hypostasis.*

□ If the definitions are the same, but it isn't for Chalcedonians, how does the dilemma you posed mean to apply to both because of different terminology that they hold to?

□ Because Christology and Triadology are directly connected, we should use consistent terminology. Using miaphysite Christological terminology, there are three Hypostases and therefore three natures, that is three gods.

□ If nature does not equate to hypostasis but rather to essence, then the result is two common essences in one Hypostasis, therefore the dyophysite definition is correct.

5

→ Are souls eternal, or do they cease to exist?

◦ *Death doesn't equal cessation of existence. Death is the separation of body and soul. So at death, God died by having His human soul and body.*

□ If the soul was a nature and body was a nature in contemplation, and they united into one nature, would they not have contradicting traits with our terminology? If they don't, where is the source of unity?

→ If the source of unity is in the nature, and the one nature died, then did the divinity resurrect itself?

◦ *The one nature can die according to one part but not the other.*

□ This separates the nature, and a nature doesn't die, the Person does.

◦ *Within the composite nature, each nature within it keeps its own properties. And to say that Christ suffered in His human nature is saying He suffered in the human part of His one Incarnate Nature.*

□ Is that not making it half a nature?

◦ *Christ is one nature – monophysis – able to do both spiritual and human things.*

□ So the one nature died, therefore no nature.

◦ *No, we don't predicate actions to mere qualities but to the one nature; we say the one nature dies ACCORDING TO this or that quality.*

□ Qualities are real, not an expression – that's actions. If you punch someone, that action reveals the quality of you being angry. These sets of two qualities can't contradict their own nature, but it's not a problem if the natures act according to their qualities in the one Hypostasis.

→ If divinity didn't resurrect itself, then who did? If it's the Father, then a divinity resurrected another divinity, making it two divinities, therefore two gods. Does this not split the Trinity?

◦ *It didn't because the divinity didn't die. Divinity is not an independent factor. It is Christ who resurrected His humanity by the power of His divinity. Leo's Tome says the Word did what pertains to the Word, and the flesh did what pertains to the flesh. But we believe that Christ claimed the deeds of the flesh as His own. His humanity didn't do one thing, and His divinity didn't do another thing; Christ did it.*

□ That is true, but each nature is still distinct, as there are different sets of attributes pertaining to each nature. Christ showed Himself both through His divinity and His humanity. But you can't ascribe divine to the human and human to the divine – you ascribe both to the Person of Christ. As for the *Tome* of St.

Leo, it affirms that it is the Person that did things through His divine nature or through His human nature.

→ If the divinity did resurrect itself, then that either makes no sense or God is just dead in essence. There is no unity there. *No concrete answer was given.*

6

→ Did the humanity die in reality or contemplation? If in reality, then the whole nature died and therefore divinity too, or at that point Christ is not the whole nature of the Incarnation.

◦ *The Person of Christ died in His humanity. Saying humanity died indicates a quality, and qualities and natures don't die, persons do according to a certain quality.*

□ Saying humanity died doesn't work for Orientals, because they believe humanity and divinity are qualities, not natures. A quality is something attributed to a certain nature, so the implication is that Christ died in His one nature, not in a set of qualities. Since there cannot be a singular nature with contradicting qualities, both humanity and divinity must die in accordance with the quality given to humanity.

→ If it died in contemplation, then Christ was not truly human, therefore there was no point to the crucifixion and resurrection, and theosis does not exist. *No concrete answer from Orientals.*

7

→ Is duality division? If it is, how?

◦ *It is division, because you divide Christ into two. Christ has one identity. A union must result in a union; the result must be some form of oneness.*

□ The Hypostatic Union is a matter of hypostasis, not a number. Saying that a union necessitates a result of one is an argument of a numerical identity, whether you like to admit that numerical identity exists or not.

□ If duality is division and poses two sons, then the Triad is also a division, and therefore poses three gods.

8

→ How are there two natures before the Incarnation? If there were *truly* two in contemplation before the union, then who was the human nature? Is this not Nestorianism?

◦ *The human nature was not present before the union. It was just the Word. The point of “in contemplation” is to speak of the things that unite, while ignoring the union for the sake of understanding what Christ is composed of. Contemplation is the division of natures into two in thought to better understand.*

□ This contradicts miaphysitism, because it teaches a union of multiple different things must result in one thing (union is in the natures), so if a human nature was not truly present, there is no union, because in reality there was one nature before and after the union, meaning there is no result. This is not to say that dyophysites believe there was one human nature in reality pre-Incarnation, but to point out how the miaphysite view doesn't work.

→ If only one nature truly existed before the union, then you agree with Chalcedonians on saying that Christ assumed our human nature and united it with His divine nature, and thus became flesh.

◦ *Christ is one nature in reality before and after the union. The difference between us and Chalcedonians is, before the union, Christ was simple, but after the union He was composite.*

□ There is no difference in that aspect, as dyophysites also believe that Christ only had one divine nature pre-Incarnation, and after the Incarnation He was composite of both a human nature and a divine nature. The difference is what composite means for us based on either miaphysitism or dyophysitism. And again, saying there is one nature in reality before and after the union contradicts a true composite union.

Summary

While this paper was not designed to attack miaphysites/non-Chalcedonians as people, it does address and uncover their heresy and inconsistency of their arguments.

Dyophysites do hope to one day reconcile with the non-Chalcedonians, as they are the closest to Orthodoxy out of all other Christian denominations. However, being the closest to the truth makes it harder to recognize it. The only way to reconcile with miaphysites is if they are willing to admit that they are in heresy, accept the seven Ecumenical Councils, as well as Eastern Orthodox Saints whom they reject, and anathematize their own miaphysite saints, such as Severus. Reconciliation cannot be reached in a way that ecumenical parties push for, like the Joint Commission, who in 1993 urged that “the lifting of anathemas should be made unanimously and simultaneously by the heads of all churches of both sides”. The truth is, you cannot reconcile with heresy. Oriental Churches don’t have the Consensus of the Fathers on Christology, which is necessary to form an infallible dogma, as one individual view can be wrong (e.g. St. Augustine’s view of original sin).



“Contradicitur.”

Pope St. Hilarius on the Robber Council.

Glossary

A

Anathema

The Church's spiritual suspension of individuals or groups due to heresy or mortal sins, banning them from communion. An individual may not declare something to be anathema, as that is the job of the Church.

B

Blameless/sinless passions

Natural passions that a human wills to do, which carry no sinful weight, such as feeling hunger so you will to eat.

Blasphemy

Disrespectful and dishonest remarks or beliefs about God, the Theotokos, or the Saints.

Utter denial of God and His message.

C

Canon Law

A Church law regarding ecclesiastical decrees and definitions of faith. Canons can be reinterpreted by Ecumenical Councils.

Chalcedonians

Christians who adhere to the decisions of the Council of Chalcedon.

Usually a term used by those who reject Chalcedon.

Christology

The theological study of Jesus Christ, including His work and Incarnation.

Church Fathers

The bishops who, near the time of the foundation of the Church, defended Her from heresy and dogmatized the Apostles' teachings. They were very influential in both their writings and things they had done during their lives.

Communion of Churches

A group of churches who recognize each other as the original Church of Christ, and therefore share communion with each other

Composite

Something made up of multiple different elements. In the case of Christ, He is composed of a divine nature and a human nature.

Consensus of the Fathers

A widely agreed upon statement or movement by the Fathers of the Church, normally speaking of those in an Ecumenical Council, and therefore infallible.

D

Divinization (by Christ)

Christ's deification of the human nature through His Incarnation, allowing us to partake in the restoration of mankind.

See Theosis.

E

Ecumenical Council

An assembly of bishops from all Christian jurisdictions that gathered to discuss ecclesiastical and doctrinal issues. It is an infallible Council due to the Consensus of the Fathers, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. There have been seven Ecumenical Councils, though other synods are also binding.

Ecumenism

A movement which proposes external unity while sacrificing internal theological beliefs for the sake of restoration of relations with heretics or non-Christians.

Essence

Common Essence; the “what-ness” of an individual, or what you are in substance.

Particular essence; a property that necessarily characterizes a single individual (a particular thing); it cannot be exemplified by more than one object.

Essence-Energy-Distinction (EED)

The theological doctrine that there is a distinction between the essence of God, and the Energies of God. We experience the Energies of God through His interactions with us and through Theosis, however we cannot know the essence of God.

Eutychianism

A heretical doctrine and monophysite school of thought started by Eutyches of Constantinople, professing one nature in Christ out of two natures, where the two natures are mixed, and as a result, the humanity is swallowed by the divinity.

G

Godhead

The Triad/Three Persons united under a common essence of God, being consubstantial with each other.

H

Heresy

A choice of beliefs that is contrary to the Church, stemming from false interpretation or cherry-picking of scripture or dogma.

Hypostatic Union

The union of the divine nature and human nature in the one Person/Hypostasis of Christ in His Incarnation.

Hypostasis

Pre-Nicene definition; An individuated nature or essence.

Cappadocian definition; Concrete reality, person, or a particular substance.

See Person.

I

Incarnation

Christ taking on flesh/a human nature in its fullness and becoming man — The Word Incarnate, who is truly God and truly man.

M

Miaphysitism

A doctrine of the Oriental Orthodox Churches, stemming from Dioscorus and Severus, which professes that Christ is in one nature out of two natures after the Incarnation.

Mia-nature (or miaphysis)

The miaphysite belief that the divine nature and the human nature united into one in Christ, where the one nature possesses 100% of properties of both natures, while still remaining numerically one.

Mia-will

The miaphysite belief that two wills united into one will in Christ.

Monophysitism

See Eutychianism

N

Nature

Common nature; *See Essence*

Particular nature; *See Particular Essence*

Nestorianism

A heretical doctrine started by Nestorius, which professes that, because Christ is composed of two natures, He must necessarily be composed of two [particular] essences. It divides Christ into two sons.

Non-Chalcedonians

People who deny the Council of Chalcedon and only follow the first three Ecumenical Councils.

Usually a term used by those who accept Chalcedon.

Numerical Identity

The belief that different things are numerically identical and therefore are one.

The belief that a union of multiple things must result in oneness.

O

Ousia

God's essence/nature.

See Essence.

P

Person

Hypostasis; who you are.

A concrete reality/subject possessing a nature/natures.

Pre-Nicene

Before the first Ecumenical Council in Nicaea in the year 325.

Q

Quality

Typically something attributed to a nature, like mortality is attributed to a human nature while immortality is attributed to a divine nature.

T

Theosis

The lifelong process of becoming "God-like" by the interaction with God through His Energies; made possible through Christ's sacrifice.

Theopaschism

The belief that God can experience suffering or pain in His essence; or, when Christ suffered in His humanity, so did the entire Godhead.

Triadology

Study of things relating to the Holy Trinity.

Bibliography

Recommended Reads

Orthodox Theology

St. Cyril of Alexandria, “On the Unity of Christ”, Translated by John Anthony McGuckin

| St. Cyril’s style of an imitated dialogue, addressing the heresy of Arianism

“Council of Chalcedon (A.D. 451) Sessions from the Acts”

<https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/3811.htm> | Sessions and dialogue from the 4th Ecumenical Council

St. Gregory Palamas, “The Triads”, Translated by Nicholas Gendle | On Theosis, Essence-Energy-Distinction, and prayer

St. Cyril of Alexandria, “Five Tomes Against Nestorius”,

https://www.tertullian.org/fathers/cyril_against_nestorius_00_intro.htm |

Christological refutations of Nestorius, especially on the suffering of Christ

Orthodox Spirituality

Kyriacos C. Markides, “The Mountain of Silence” | Kyriacos’ spiritual lessons and

experience at Mount Athos and conversations with monks — answering spiritual questions

St. Athanasius Academy of Orthodox Theology, “The Orthodox Study Bible” (OSB - NKJV) |

<https://azbyka.ru/otechnik/books/file/18430-The-Orthodox-Study-Bible.pdf> | The Orthodox Bible with commentary

St. Seraphim Rose, “God’s Revelation to the Human Heart” | The struggle of salvation

Oriental Theology

His Holiness Pope Shenouda III, “The Nature of Christ” | Coptic and Oriental view on Christology and the one nature

Rev. Dr. Vrej Nersessian, “Christology of the Armenian Church” | The Armenian perspective on Church history and Christology, as well as Nerses Shnorhali’s *Definition of Faith of the Armenian Church*

Abouna Peter Farrington, “The Oriental Orthodox Rejection of Chalcedon” | Oriental concerns and rejection regarding Chalcedon